MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION



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2009PHUPD005

TO: Animal Health; Healthcare; Public Health; Local Health Departments

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: Rabies Vaccine Available for Pre-exposure Rabies Prophylaxis

DATE: June 19, 2009

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PAGES: 2

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Novartis Rabies Vaccine, RabAvert®, Available for Pre-exposure Rabies Prophylaxis

Brief: Novartis announces sufficient RabAvert® rabies vaccine to resume pre-exposure prophylaxis for groups at risk for rabies virus exposure.

Background: Since early 2008, rabies vaccine has been in decreased supply in the United States. Previously, due to the limited supply, pre-exposure vaccination was suspended for groups at risk for rabies exposure. Please see archived HAN's from October 23, 2008 and September 15, 2008 at http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php

Recommendations: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that pre-exposure vaccination be considered for persons who have frequent contact with rabies virus or with potentially rabid animals, such as veterinarians, veterinary staff, animal handlers and rehabilitators, rabies researchers and laboratory workers. Certain international travelers may also be recommended for pre-exposure vaccination. For complete ACIP guidelines, including pre- and post exposure prophylaxis with rabies vaccine see: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr57e507a1.htm

RabAvert® rabies vaccine, produced by Novartis, is available for both for pre-exposure and post-exposure rabies vaccination with no supply restrictions.

Imovax® rabies vaccine, produced by Sanofi Pasteur, remains in limited supply. At this time, Imovax® is available for post-exposure prophylaxis only.

To obtain Imovax® vaccine, providers should contact Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 for an exposure risk assessment, a Sanofi Pasteur Post-Exposure passcode and post-exposure form. The shortage of Imovax® is expected to continue into late 2009.

For More Information: For more information regarding rabies vaccine supply, including ordering vaccine, please see http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/news/RabVaxupdate.html
For questions regarding rabies pre- or post-exposure management, contact the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.